

Chairman Brown, members of the committee. My name is James Rehm. I am one of the owner operators of Smoot Honey Company in Power, MT. We run bees in Lewis & Clark, Cascade, Teton, Pondera, and Toole Counties. I am also the legislative liaison for the Montana State Beekeepers Association. The association has about three quarters of the states commercial beekeepers as members. We would like to let you know that we are opposed to SB 216. Under current Montana law, a commercial beekeeper must maintain a 3 mile buffer zone between him and a different commercial beekeeper. Hobbyists, landowners, and pollination sites are exempt from this law. The law is to help control the spread of different bee diseases and pests that are highly contagious. SB 216 creates a loophole that a commercial beekeeper can circumvent this three mile law and place beehives wherever they want to with a willing landowner.

This is not about landowner rights. Under current Montana law, a landowner may place as many beehives on their land as they want; the only condition is that they have to be the ones that run the hives. They cannot have a commercial beekeeper run the bees for them. SB 216 will create a landowner registered site that the bees will be run by a commercial beekeeper. There will not be a buffer zone that helps isolate diseases and pests. Thus the loophole is created. 7

This is not about pollination. Under current Montana law, if there is a crop that would benefit from bees, i.e. needing pollination, the grower can file with the state for a pollination registered site. This site would be populated with bees from a commercial beekeeper, maintained there by the commercial beekeeper until the bloom out period, and then removed by the commercial beekeeper. This is all done in a certain time frame; the bees do not stay there throughout the entire bee season. The crop has benefitted, it's been pollinated, and there has been as minimal exposure to all beehives in that area as possible.

In the winter of 2007-2008, a sudden "Collapse" of beehives happened. You probably heard of this. They termed it CCD, Colony Collapse Disorder. This collapsing of beehives ran rampant throughout the United States. Every state was affected by it, even Montana. Although Montana did have its share of CCD, it did not blanket the entire state as it did others. Montana had hot spots where CCD hit. It hit this beekeeper but not that beekeeper. This was because of the current buffer zone, required by law, which Montana has.

SB 216 would make it possible for a commercial beekeeper to sidestep the 3 mile buffer zone. Under SB 216, a landowner could register 20 different sites with 24 hives on each of them. That is 480 hives that could be brought in and placed, by a commercial beekeeper, right next to other commercially registered sites. This eliminates the buffer zone for disease control as well as over saturates the area with too many bees. It is kind of like trying to put 100 cows

on 1 acre of pasture, it just doesn't work. It seems that this bill is designed to help a very select few while harming the rest of the commercial beekeeping industry.

Many members of the Montana State Beekeepers Association are here today. In the interest of time, they are not going to testify but came here today to show that they are opposed to SB 216.

Beekeeper	Counties
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5
6	6
7	7
8	8
9	9
10	10
11	11
12	12
13	13
14	14
15	15
16	16
17	17
18	18
19	19
20	20
21	21
22	22
23	23
24	24
25	25
26	26
27	27
28	28
29	29
30	30
31	31
32	32
33	33
34	34
35	35
36	36
37	37
38	38
39	39
40	40
41	41
42	42
43	43
44	44
45	45
46	46
47	47
48	48
49	49
50	50
51	51
52	52
53	53
54	54
55	55
56	56
57	57
58	58
59	59
60	60
61	61
62	62
63	63
64	64
65	65
66	66
67	67
68	68
69	69
70	70
71	71
72	72
73	73
74	74
75	75
76	76
77	77
78	78
79	79
80	80
81	81
82	82
83	83
84	84
85	85
86	86
87	87
88	88
89	89
90	90
91	91
92	92
93	93
94	94
95	95
96	96
97	97
98	98
99	99
100	100

Beekeeper	Counties
-----------	----------

[illegible][illegible]